

Girl Athletes Headed For Sex Extinction Says Scientist



"Sensational" Suzanne Lenglen, the Spectacular French Tennis Champion Whose Nervous Collapse Was Attributed to "Too Much Strenuousness."

JUST as American girls are taking to strenuous sports with all the vim of their brothers on diamond and gridiron, the warning is flashed from England, "Pull up! You are heading for sex extinction!"

Just as American educators are encouraging athletics in girls' schools as enthusiastically as in boys', British biologists explode this bombshell, "Stop! You are breeding a neuter sex, neither male nor female; you are destroying mothers when you make champions!"

Heads of such institutions as Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, Barnard and a thousand lesser institutions throughout the United States are frankly flabbergasted. Their

And Here,
Photographically
Illustrated, Are
Some of the 1922
"Perils" Which
Biologists Now
Declare Are "Making
Champions and
Destroying Mothers"

Playing Football Like This Has Been Classed As a "Dangerous Abnormality." The Photo Shows Miss Mary Corcoran of the British Association Team Making a Try for Goal.



Mrs. Ida Schnitzer Believes in Standing on Her Head Although All Such Exercises as This Are Being Denounced as "Too Violent for Women."



Neck and Neck Over the Hurdles. Miss Florence Baston, (Centre) of Rosemary Hall, Winning the 60-Yard Event at the Mamaroneck Interstate Meet for Girls' College Athletes.

pet theories are being twisted topsy-turvy, they may have to revolutionize their entire scheme of physical education.

All of them boast gymnasiums. All insist on exercise for their students. Most of them have basketball, track and hockey teams. Many have introduced football and baseball for girls. The new girl athlete is the type of the hour. Everywhere girls are being converted to boys' games. They themselves are "crazy" about sports. They ride, fence, row, swim, golf; they yell for their teams; they enter inter-school contests; they break records; they strive for muscular development.

In the face of this universal movement is flung this sudden declaration from English educators and men of science:

"Unless there are speedy and fundamental changes in the prevailing system of physical education for the modern girl, the female sex will become extinct as such. In a generation or so, it will not exist, and instead we will have a sort of 'man-woman'—a distinct third sex."

These are the words of George Chambers, secretary of the committee formed in London by the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians, and the British Medical Women's Association, for the avowed purpose of combating strenuous sports for girls. The committee sent out questionnaires to leading medical authorities, heads of girls' schools and heads of hospitals, asking for their observations on the training of girls. Nine-tenths of the replies denounced such sports for women as football, swimming, rowing and lacrosse.

Doctors declared that such games impair the functions of motherhood and cause incalculable suffering to women in later years. Eminent biologists asserted that women athletes spend all their "capital" and consequently are producing "an emasculated race of men." Champion

women athletes are often sterile, they said; moreover, women athletes take on masculine traits to the point where the feminine in them is all but crushed out.

"Biologists have long recognized the existence of the 'third sex' as a social factor to be reckoned with," wrote Dr. Leonard Williams, distinguished biologist associated with Professor Julian Huxley in his investigations. "They have long viewed with alarm the increase in the ranks of these 'human deviations,' created by our modern ideas about the physical education of girls."

Dr. Williams went on to explain why athletics bring about a "third sex." Nature,

he said, apportions to each human being only a certain amount of energy. At the age of adolescence this energy is distributed to the various organs of the body according to sex and the different requirements of the sexes. Until this age is reached sex is neuter. Boys and girls under the age of adolescence are, scientifically speaking, neither male nor female, but simply children without sex distinction.

"When a girl reaches the age of ado-

English College Girls in a Tug-of-War.



Miss Catherine McCullough, Champion High Jumper at Wellesley, Illustrating One of the Very Strenuous Feats Against Which the Outcry Has Been Raised.

lescence," continued Dr. Williams, "she lapses naturally into a state of inactivity, for the simple reason that nature is diverting most of her energy to the creative organism. What precisely happens when we thrust girls into a whirl of exhaustive games like football and hockey, is that their energy is unnaturally diverted from the natural channel and spent in sport. The result, inevitably, is a sterile woman, developing all the male characteristics in her composition; or, at best, a woman producing weedy, sickly children."

Another description of the "third sex" is given by Miss M. Bennell, a distinguished British educator, who says the "man-woman" is "physically like a Grenadier in petticoats; she is a dangerous abnormality. For several years we have watched the rapid development of this unhappy and curious creature. We classified the type as 'men-women,' and dismissed them from our minds as the unlovely specimens of a misapplied physical training. The biologists, however, have awakened us to the gravity of this new entity in our social life. They discovered,

and substantiated by their scientific investigations, what we had merely suspected, that we are actually producing men-women—women in whom the male element is over-developed."

Girls, declares Miss Bennell, do not naturally desire strenuous games. They are shy and dreamy at that age. But they are "shamed into sports." Many become teachers and train other "grenadiers in petticoats."

Miss Bennell, Dr. Williams and their associates on the Committee for the Prohibition of Girls' Games are proceeding on the assumption that there is a fundamental difference in the physical makeup of man and woman—that girls can be taught to be healthy without blindly imitating the games of men and boys. They do not ban all sports, only those which divert energy from the creative organs to the muscles.

Their campaign has not been all smooth sailing. A number of prominent Englishwomen have taken up the cudgels for the other side. One of these, Dr. Letitia Fairfield, who was woman medical director of the Royal Air Force during the war, disagrees with the biologists.

"Give us proofs!" she cries, "not unsubstantiated statements. It is ridiculous to say that child-birth is often rendered difficult for women who have played games. Every doctor knows that certain muscles are involved when a baby is born that are strengthened, not weakened, by games. So many factors are responsible for sterility that it is impossible to attribute that to games."

"Women have ridden horseback for centuries, and their children have not been affected. You have only to look at the middle-class, middle-aged woman who has played similar games, and compare her to a woman of similar age belonging to the working class, and you will see how games have benefited her."

Women athletes themselves have greeted the Games Prohibitionists with snorts of indignation and disdain. At the recent Women's Olympiad at Monte Carlo, competed in by champions from a score of countries, resolutions were adopted deploring the outcry against women's sports.

"Training for sports will make you feel fit," declared

Miss Mary Lines, winner of the 250 metre flat race and the long jump. "It is nonsense to say swimming isn't good for girls—why, it made me

healthy when I was puny!" asserted Miss Doris Hart, winner of the 200 metres breast stroke. "It certainly makes women stronger," agreed Mrs. Lucy Kiltner Harland. "Swimming developed me into a fine, healthy woman," was the testimony of Mrs. Olive Matthews (nee Olive Carson), "and I have a strong, healthy boy three and a half years old!" she added.

That American scientists, physicians and educators, already keenly interested, will be drawn actively into the "third sex" controversy, is indicated by the London committee, which proposes to extend its researches to this country.

What a survey of girl athletes in the United States will show remains to be seen. In the meantime, college authorities in many cities are debating the subject. "Do sports for women do harm or good? Will they develop strong, healthy mothers, or will they lead to a third sex, neither man nor woman?"